

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 02200 271209Z

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ACTION NEA-05

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FBO-01 A-01 EB-05 COME-00 DRC-01 RSC-01

/015 W

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R 271045Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6860

UNCLAS JIDDA 2200

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ABLD, SA

SUBJECT: EMBASSY QUARTERS IN RIYADH

REFS: (A) JIDDA 5623 OF 12/20/73; (B) JIDDA A-8 OF 1/30/74

SUMMARY: RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND SAUDI ARABIA ARE RAPIDLY BECOMING EVEN MORE ACTIVE AND IMPORTANT THAN IN FORMER YEARS. RATE OF TRAVEL BY EMBASSY AND OTHER US VISITORS TO RIYADH HAS DRAMATICALLY INCREASED. RIYADH'S PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS, HOWEVER, ARE CHRONICALLY FULL AND INAPPROPRIATE FOR ANY TYPE OF REPRESENTATIONAL ACTIVITY. EMBASSY HAS IN PAST REQUESTED AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH OFFICE/RESIDENCE IN RIYADH TO SERVE FOR A PERMANENT COMMERCIAL OFFICER AND FOR SUPPORT OF AMBASSADOR AND EMBOFFS IN RIYADH ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS. RENTS ARE RISING CONSTANTLY UNDER BOOM CONDITIONS IN RIYADH, BUT NECESSARY FACILITIES CAN BE PROVIDED AT AN ANNUAL RATE OF \$27,000 AND INITIAL ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF \$60,500. REQUEST DEPARTMENT'S EARLY CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING A RESIDENCE IN RIYADH. END SUMMARY.

1. SINCE END OF OCTOBER WAR AND GREATLY INCREASE LEVELS OF ACTIVITY BETWEEN US AND SAUDI GOVERNMENTS, EMBASSY'S NEED FOR A QUARTERS TRANSIENT FACILITY IN RIYADH HAS BECOME URGENT. IN THE MONTH OF MARCH, 1974 EMBASSY OFFICERS (INCLUDING AMBASSADOR AKINS) SPENT A TOTAL OF 58 WORKDAYS--MOSTLY IN RIYADH--ON USG BUSINESS. THIS UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 JIDDA 02200 271209Z

TOTAL, MOREOVER, DOES NOT INCLUDE 83 MANDAYS SPENT IN

RIYADH AT THE BEGINNING OF MARCH IN PREPARATION FOR AND SUPPORT OF SECRETARY KISSINGER'S VISIT.

2. RIYADH'S HOTELS HAVE NEVER BEEN WELL REGARDED FOR THEIR FARE OR ACCOMMODATIONS, AND THE FEW THAT APPROACH WESTERN STANDARDS ARE NOW CHRONICALLY FULL. EVEN IF SPACE CAN BE OBTAINED IN THEM, HOWEVER, THEY DO NOT PROVIDE A VENUE FOR PRIVATE, RELAXED DISCUSSIONS OR FOR THE SORT OF REPRESENTATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT THAT WOULD BE POSSIBLE IF EMBASSY HAD A HOUSE OF ITS OWN. NUMBER OF EMBASSY VISITS TO RIYADH, ALSO, IS NOW SO GREAT THAT WE CANNOT IN FAIRNESS CONTINUE TO ASK US OFFICIALS RESIDENT THERE (COE, SANG, USMTM, AID) TO PROVIDE LODGING AND ACT AS SURROGATE HOSTS.

3. FOLLOWING ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW US-SAUDI SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP ON APRIL 5, IN WHICH TWO GOVERNMENTS PLEDGED THEMSELVES TO WORK FOR CLOSER AND BROADER COOPERATION IN ECONOMIC, INDUSTRIAL, SCIENTIFIC AND MILITARY AFFAIRS, WE BELIEVE TRAFFIC OF EMBASSY OFFICERS TO RIYADH (OFTEN ACCOMPANIED BY VISITING US OFFICIALS OR PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN) WILL INCREASE.

4. EMBASSY HAS PREVIOUSLY POINTED OUT NEED FOR A RIYADH BASE OF OPERATIONS (REFERENCES ABOVE), AND SECRETARY KISSINGER QUERIED AMBASSADOR AKINS ABOUT ABSENCE OF SUCH A FACILITY DURING HIS LAST VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA. SECRETARY APPEARED SURPRISED THAT A RESIDENCE TOGETHER WITH LOCAL SUPPORT STAFF AND FACILITIES WERE NOT AVAILABLE AND SAID THIS SHOULD BE GIVEN HIGH PRIORITY AS US IN-COUNTRY PRESENCE EVOLVES IN RESPONSE TO CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES.

5. PRELIMINARY AND DISCREET INQUIRIES VIA US AGENCIES IN RIYADH INDICATE PROPERTY VALUES ARE AT A RECORD LEVEL AND ARE STEADILY RISING. ESTIMATES MADE AS RECENTLY AS 1973 (REF A) ARE ALREADY SOMEWHAT OUT OF DATE. OUR SOURCES--THAT INCLUDE THE COE AND THE NATIONAL GUARD PROJECT OFFICE--STATE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO LOCATE A NUMBER OF SUITABLE LOCATIONS FOR EMBASSY TRANSIENT UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 JIDDA 02200 271209Z

QUARTERS. QUARTERS CONSIST OF PAIRED OR SEMI-DETACHED VILLAS THAT COULD ACCOMMODATE SMALL EMBASSY OFFICE, TRANSIENT QUARTERS AND RESIDENCE FOR ECON/ COMMERCIAL OFFICER TO SERVE IN RIYADH MORE OR LESS PERMANENTLY. SUCH PROPERTIES ARE NOW RENTING FOR BETWEEN SR 50,000-SR 60,000 PER ANNUM.

6. TRANSIENT QUARTERS WILL NEED TO BE FURNISHED AND

LOCAL HELP (AT LEAST COOK/HOUSEBOY) PROVIDED. ESTIMATED COSTS OF FURNISHINGS FOR FIRST YEAR'S OPERATION FOLLOWS; FIGURES HAVE BEEN EXTRACTED FROM INFO PREVIOUSLY FURNISHED DEPARTMENT, AND WITH RESPECT TO RENTAL COSTS, ARE SOMEWHAT UPDATED:

A. RENT OF EMBASSY OFFICE/QUARTERS - \$15,000. (PAYMENT OF MORE THAN ONE YEAR MAY HAVE TO BE MADE, HOWEVER).

B. ANNUAL COST FOR UTILITIES - \$7,000.

C. FURNISHING - \$20,000.

D. EXTRA FURNISHINGS OF REPRESENTATIONAL NATURE (INCLUDING SILVER, GLASSWARE, ETC., TO BE USED BY AMBASSADOR) - \$5,000.

E. ONE VEHICLE - \$7,000.

F. KITCHEN UTENSILS (SHEETS, LINENS) - \$1,500.

G. HOUSEBOY/COOK - \$3,000.

H. MAINTENANCE CONTRACT - \$3,000.

TOTAL - \$60,500.

7. REQUEST DEPARTMENT GIVE EARLY ATTENTION TO FUNDING AN EMBASSY RESIDENTCE IN RIYADH.  
AKINS

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## Message Attributes

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